



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING  
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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Planning Board Hearing of September 18, 2014

Case Number: PB 406

Petitioner: Somerworth II, LC

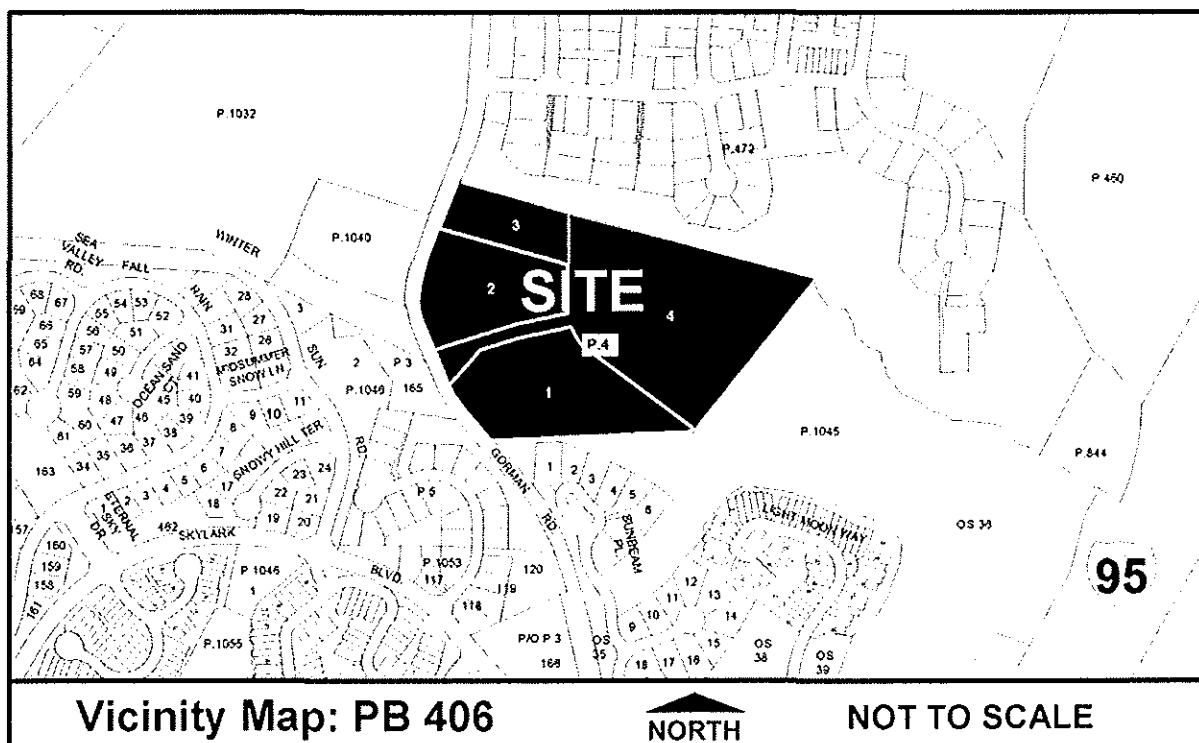
Project Name: Walden Woods

File Number: SDP-13-023

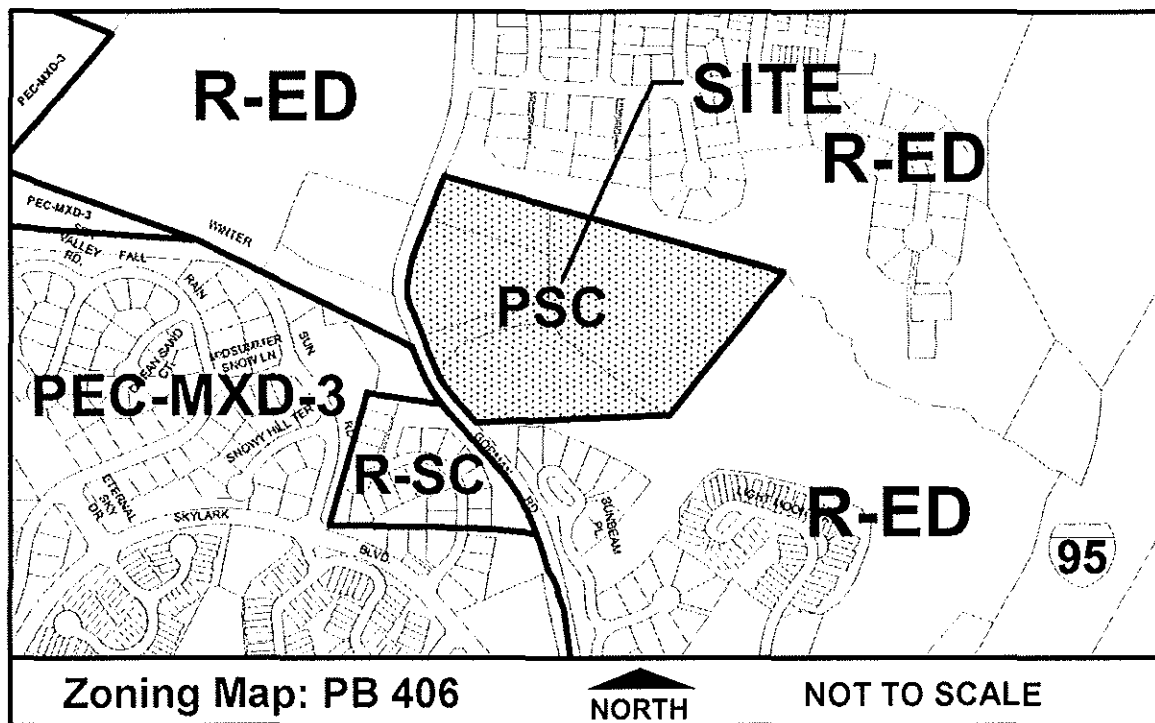
**Request:** For Planning Board approval of a site development plan for development located in the PSC Zoning District, in accordance with Subsection 127.1.L.2. of the Howard County Zoning Regulations. The proposed development, known as "Walden Woods", consists of 97 age-restricted adult housing units (87 townhomes and 10 detached units) and a community center on 18.61 acres± of land. The plan was heard by the Planning Board on July 17, 2004 and approved, however since it was determined by the Department of Planning and Zoning that the property was inadequately posted prior to the July 17, 2014 hearing a second hearing was scheduled and the property again posted.

**Recommendation:** Approval, based on the plan meeting or exceeding Planning Board evaluation criteria.

**Location:** The proposed development is located on the east side of Gorman Road, approximately 1,000 feet north of Skylark Boulevard, in the Sixth Election District of Howard County in Laurel, Maryland.



**Vicinal Properties:** The property currently consists of the four lots of the "Waskey Property" subdivision (Plat 5192); the lots are owned by the petitioner. The property is located on Gorman Road, which lies west of the property. The Wincopia Farms subdivision, zoned R-ED and approved by the Planning Board on June 27, 2012, is located north of the property. Wincopia Farms has been subdivided and is currently in the process of road construction and site development. Gorman Road has been closed this summer as a result of a road reconstruction project as part of Wincopia Farms' development and approval of Walden Woods road reconstruction plans. Open space and single-family detached units of the Emerson development are located east and south of the property.



**Legal Notices:** The subject property was properly posted with one official Planning Board notice. Certifications that legal advertisements appeared in the Baltimore Sun and in the Howard County Times were placed in the file for the record.

**Regulatory Compliance:** This project is subject to compliance with the amended Fifth Edition of the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Howard County Zoning Regulations (effective October 6, 2013), the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and the Howard County Forest Conservation and Landscape Manuals.

**Project History:**

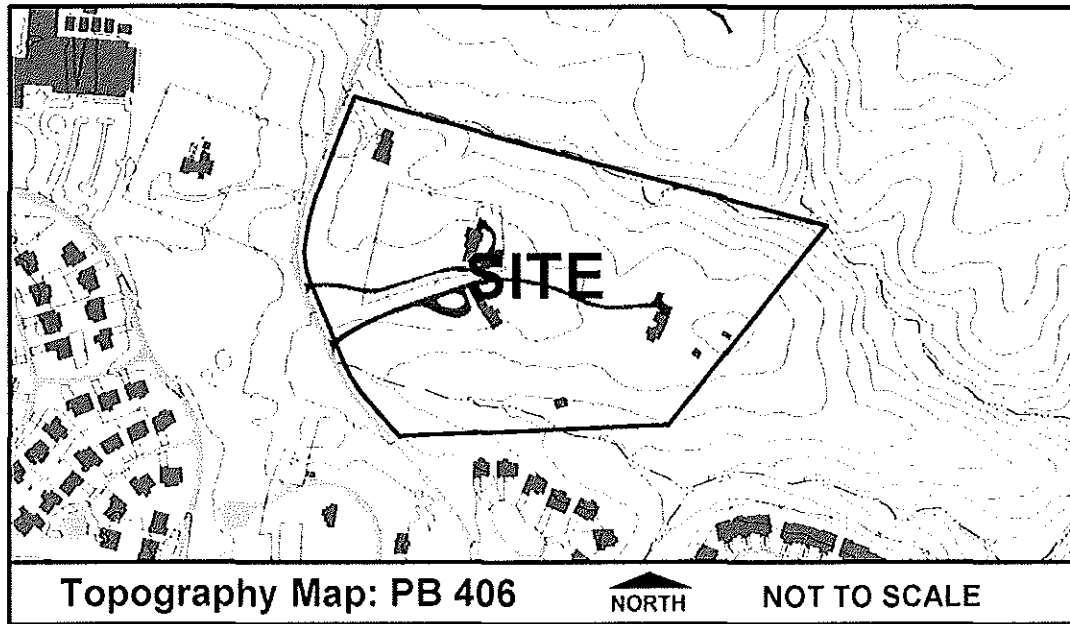
- 05/16/2005: Zoning Board approves ZB-1041M, approving the preliminary development plan for "Westover Glen", a PSC-zoned development comprising 139 units.
- 05/29/2012: DPZ approves Waiver Petition WP-12-131, allowing development activities to take place within stream buffers and allowing single family attached lots to have minimum public road frontage of less than 15 feet.
- 09/12/2012: DPZ approves WP-13-020, allowing the plan to proceed to final and site development plan stages without prior submission and approval of sketch or preliminary plans.
- 09/24/2012: Zoning Board approves ZB-1101M, approving the present preliminary development plan for the property.
- 11/28/2012: Petitioner submits SDP-13-023, Walden Woods to DPZ.
- 05/14/2013 DPZ approves WP-13-093, relieving the developer of the requirement to construct sidewalks on both sides of the streets in the development and allowing the developer to remove two specimen trees as part of site development.
- 05/29/2014: DPZ determines that SDP-13-023, Walden Woods is "approvable", subject to Planning Board approval.
- 07/17/2014: Planning Board approves PB 406/SDP-13-023.

**Site and Density Information Chart:**

Total Gross Area	18.61 acres±
Area of 100-Year Floodplain	0.35 acres±
Area of Steep Slopes (Outside of Floodplain)	0.30 acres±
Total Net Area (Sub Floodplain and Steep Slopes)	17.96 acres±
Area of Proposed Site Disturbance	14.80 acres±
Units Permitted by ZB-1101M	97 dwelling units
Units Proposed by SDP-13-023	97 dwelling units
Parking Spaces Required	274 spaces
Parking Spaces Proposed	430 spaces
Area of Open Space Required (as F-13-067)	6.51 acres±
Area of Open Space Proposed (as F-13-067)	11.21 acres±
Area of Community Space Required	1,940 square feet
Area of Community Space Proposed	2,300 square feet

## General Comments

**Overall Site Conditions and Pending Proposal:** The site is 18.61 acres in size and can be characterized as relatively flat to gently sloping bordered by stream systems along the northern and southern boundaries. The site is currently improved, consisting of four single family detached homes on each existing lot of the Waskey Property subdivision.



The proposed development consists of the construction of 97 units (87 attached and 10 detached), a 2,300 square-foot community center and associated infrastructure. One point of access (Wilderness Lane – a private road) to the site is proposed from Gorman Road. The area of open space proposed meets the PSC open space requirements and sufficient community space in the form of a community center would be provided.

**Water and Sewer:** The site is within the Planned Service Area and Metropolitan District. Accordingly, the site will be served by both public water and public sewer.

**Vehicular Access:** The site has direct access to Gorman Road, a minor collector road, via proposed Wilderness Lane. Gorman Road is proposed to be widened and realigned along the Walden Woods and Wincopia Farms frontage.

**Environmental Resources:** The site contains stream systems and associated floodplains which correspond roughly to the northern and southern property boundaries. A waiver (WP-12-131) was approved to allow disturbances in the stream buffer which will result from construction of stormwater management facilities. A disturbance in the stream buffer is proposed as a result of installation of underground utility lines; this disturbance is considered necessary by the Department in accordance with Subsection 16.116(c) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

**Historic Resources and Cemeteries:** The property is not included on the Historic Sites Map as a historic site and there are no known cemeteries on site. This section of Gorman Road is designated as a Scenic Road in the Scenic Roads Inventory.

**APFO Roads Test:** A traffic study prepared by David A. Nelson, P.D. dated April 27, 2010 determined that the project satisfies Howard County Adequate Road Facilities Test Evaluation requirements. The DPZ, Development Engineering Division approved the APFO Roads Test on May 28, 2014.

**Schools Test:** This project is an age-restricted community; it will not be tested for school capacity. The project will be tested for housing unit allocations upon issuance of the Planning Board Decision and Order for this case.

**Stormwater Management:** Stormwater management for this project will be provided in accordance with the MDE 2007 Standards for Environmental Design utilizing bio-retention facilities, sand filters and dry wells.

**Forest Conservation:** Forest conservation obligations for this site will be satisfied by the combination of on-site forest retention, on-site forest planting and by the purchase of credits at a forest conservation bank.

**Landscaping:** Landscaping for this project meets or exceeds the requirements of Section 16.124 of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and the Howard County Landscape Manual.

**Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) Requirement:** This project requires 10% MIHU units or 10. The developer will pay a fee-in-lieu to the County to satisfy this requirement.

**Planning Board Evaluation Standards:** The standards by which the Planning Board is to evaluate the site development plan are found in Howard County Zoning Regulations Subsection 127.1.M.2. The Planning Board shall approve a site development plan if it finds that the plan:

1. *"Is consistent with the approved Preliminary Development Plan, Comprehensive Sketch Plan and Development Criteria."* (§127.1.M.2.a.)

The site development plan is consistent with the approved Preliminary Development Plan and Development Criteria in that the number of units and the unit mix has remained the same, the street layout has remained the same and amenities proposed have remained the same. The plan layout and design adheres to the Development Criteria. The intent of the Preliminary Development Plan is for the subject parcel to be used as an age-restricted adult housing development that provides 87 attached and 10 detached age-restricted units and a community center. The site development plan is consistent with the intent of the Preliminary Development Plan.

2. *"Satisfies the requirements of Section 127.1.H."* (§127.1.M.2.b.) which are:

a. *The Comprehensive Sketch Plan or Site Development Plan and Development Criteria are consistent with the approved Preliminary Development Plan and Preliminary Development Criteria.*

The project is consistent with the criteria described by the PDP and ZB 1101M. The intended use satisfies the intent and purpose of the PSC Zoning District in which it is located by providing housing for older adults and elderly persons, and provides diverse housing to meet the varying needs of residents while ensuring compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. The subject property and proposed development have direct access onto Gorman Road, a minor collector road. The project proposes the number of units indicated by the PDP (97), and a fee-in-lieu will be paid to satisfy the Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) requirement. The development of this project proposes 11.21 acres of open space, which is 60% of the area subject to the requirement; this far exceeds the minimum required open space of 35%. In accordance with the PDP, the project will provide a 2,300 square-foot community center.

b. *The phasing of the development is consistent with the phasing schedule indicated in the Preliminary Development Plan.*

The development will not be constructed in phases. Phasing was not indicated by the PDP nor is it indicated by the site development plan.

c. *The Comprehensive Sketch Plan or Site Development Plan and Development Criteria specify how the standards in Section 127.1.G will be met.*

The site development plan provides detailed information to convey the site plan requirements as outlined in Sections 127.1.G.1 and 127.1.G.2 of the Zoning Regulations. The site boundary, topography, existing vegetation, and adjacent streams and 100-year floodplain are identified and delineated on the site development plan. Primary access to the site is from an internal private road (Wilderness Lane) connecting to Gorman Road. A detailed landscape plan has been provided as part of the site plan set. Several easements and maintenance agreements will be put in place to construct and maintain utilities and stormwater management facilities. The cover sheet provides information on units proposed, MIHU's, parking and other development criteria. The site has been designed to make the site fully ADA accessible and Universal Design Features will be incorporated into the units.

3. *"Makes effective use of landscaping to provide buffers where needed and to enhance the site design."* (§127.1.M.2.c.)

The design of the project takes into consideration the surrounding residential neighborhood. The development has, to its benefit and the benefit of the adjacent communities, wooded stream corridors along the northern and southern property boundaries, and wooded open space is located to the east. The wooded stream corridors, which will be protected in perpetuity by forest conservation easements, provide an excellent buffer between the development and the existing Emerson development to the south and the proposed Wincopia Farms development to the north. Perimeter landscaping will nonetheless be provided along the western Gorman Road frontage and along the eastern boundary shared with the Emerson open space.

PB 406: Walden Woods

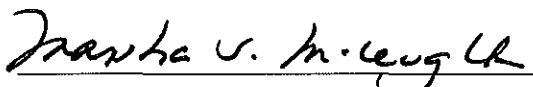
Planning Board Hearing of September 18, 2014

Page 7 of 7

**SRC Action:** The Subdivision Review Committee determined this plan may be approved, subject to approval of Administrative Adjustment AA-14-012 to allow a tee-turnaround in the 50' structure and use setback from Gorman Road, and minor comments of the Division of Land Development and Development Engineering Division being addressed on the plan originals.

The site development plan file is available for public review at the Public Service Counter of the Department of Planning and Zoning, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Recommendation:** The Department of Planning and Zoning recommends approval of Planning Board Case Number 406, Site Development Plan SDP-13-023, subject to any Planning Board approval conditions being addressed.



Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director  
Department of Planning and Zoning

8/26/14  
Date

MSM:DBB:dbb



MI HOMES - 28' TOWNHOME  
ARCHITECTURE COLLABORATIVE  
**'WALDEN WOODS'**



**FRONT ELEVATION**



**SIDE ELEVATION**

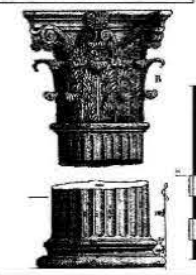
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MI HOMES	date	06/18/14
WALDEN WOODS	FILE #	TOWNHOMES
drawn	scale	3/16" = 1'
content	title	'WALDEN WOODS' FRONT ELEVATIONS

revisions	

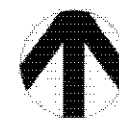
SHEET #











# WALDEN WOODS

GORMAN ROAD  
HOWARD COUNTY

6/23/14  
MARYLAND

